

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 FEA-02 SCI-06 MED-03 COME-00

PM-07 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 HEW-08

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R 171449Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7165

UNCLAS LONDON 00748

DEPARTMENT PASS COMMERCE, DOD AND HEW

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BGEN

SUBJECT: SURGICAL (EYE TYPE) DISPOSABLE NEEDLES

1. SIR JOHN FOSTER, MP, HAS CALLED ON EMBASSY REPRESENTING JONAH WARNER, LTD., SUBSIDIARY OF THE AMERICAN FIRM, RICHARD-ALLAN MEDICAL INDUSTRIES OF 1335 DODGE STREET, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS, 60204. BRITISH FIRM SUPPLIES AMERICAN PARENT WITH 100 PERCENT OF ITS PRODUCTION OF SURGICAL EYE DISPOSABLE NEEDLES, WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR 45 PERCENT OF AMERICAN MARKET ACCORDING TO BRITISH COMPANY. BRITISH FIRM CURRENTLY LIMITED TO 36 HOURS A WEEK PRODUCTION AS OPPOSED TO PREVIOUS 48-56 HOUR WEEKS. THIS HAS REDUCED OUTPUT FROM 1200 GROSS NEEDLES PER WEEK TO 500. PRESIDENT OF AMERICAN COMPANY, RICHARD NEWHAUSER, WHO IS CURRENTLY IN EUROPE CHECKING ALTERNATE SUPPLIERS, STATES THAT PRIOR TO ENERGY CUTBACKS IN UK DELAYS HIS COMPANY'S DELIVERY TO HOSPITALS WERE RUNNING APPROXIMATELY 4-5 WEEKS AND SINCE PRODUCTION CUTS ARE RUNNING 8-10 WEEKS, WITH DELAYS IN DELIVERY EXPECTED TO INCREASE. ALSO ACCORDING TO NEWHAUSER, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR COMPETITORS TO INCREASE THEIR PRODUCTION AS THEY ARE ALREADY BEHIND IN THEIR DELIVERIES.

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2. BRITISH COMPANY HAS SOUGHT RELIEF FROM NEW MINISTRY

OF ENERGY BUT HAS BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL YET IN OBTAINING SAME AND CONSEQUENTLY HAS APPROACHED EMBASSY FOR ASSISTANCE IN VIEW OF PRESUMABLY STRONG U.S. INTEREST IN THIS SITUATION.

3. DESPITE BRITISH GOVERNMENT DESIRE AND NEED FOR EXPORTS, APPARENTLY AT THIS CRITICAL TIME MEDICAL SUPPLIES FOR HOME CONSUMPTION HAVE PRIORITY OVER EXPORTS. FOR EXAMPLE, A BRITISH SUBSIDIARY OF ANOTHER U.S. MANUFACTURER, WHICH SUPPLIES ALL ITS SURGICAL NEEDLE PRODUCTION TO HOME MARKET, HAS OBTAINED DISPENSATION FROM HMG TO EXCEED THE 3 DAY WEEK.

4. EMBASSY EXPLAINED TO SIR JOHN WE WERE OBVIOUSLY UNABLE TO ASSESS CRITICAL NATURE OF U.S. SITUATION AND IN FACT HAD PREVIOUSLY ADVISED HIM AND BRITISH SUBSIDIARY TO HAVE AMERICAN COMPANY APPROACH APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES IN WASHINGTON. AS A RESULT OF SIR JOHN'S ACTIVITIES WE UNDERSTAND THIS IS HAPPENING BUT WE ALSO HAVE RECEIVED LETTERS REQUESTING EMBASSY ASSISTANCE FROM NATIONAL NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER. BETHESDA, MARYLAND, HOSPITAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, FAIRVIEW GENERAL HOSPITAL, CLEVELAND, OHIO, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES, THE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS AND THE ASSOCIATION OF OPERATING ROOM NURSES, INC., DENVER, COLORADO.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ADVICE ON SITUATION SURGICAL NEEDLES IN U.S. IN ORDER TO REPLY TO SIR JOHN AND ADVICE AS TO WHAT ACTION, IF ANY, DEPARTMENT WISHES EMBASSY TO TAKE WITH RESPECT TO HMG ON THIS MATTER.
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